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ABSTRACT

In these lectures the author examines current criticisms of secondary education in light of the history of secondary education reform and then discusses future prospects for reform as they relate to the place of secondary education in modern American society. The author begins by presenting a retrospective analysis of a number of studies and reform proposals dating from 1893 to 1972. He then examines the current spate of reports and reform proposals, identifying and discussing 11 themes that seem to be common. He concludes by examining future prospects and likely directions for secondary education reform, based on this analysis of the history of educational reform and current social and educational trends. (JG)

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Secondary Education Reform: Retrospect and Prospect

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Secondary Education Reform: Retrospect and Prospect

I AM HONORED to have been selected to deliver the Sachs Memorial Lectures on Secondary Education, although I approach my topic with considerable apprehension. In the audience are three presidents of Teachers College, each of whom has been part of the history of secondary education in America.

Hollis L. Caswell chaired the committee which wrote the eighth yearbook of the John Dewey Society, *The American High School: Its Responsibility and Opportunity*. Published in 1946, the yearbook observed that:

> In spite of substantial achievements by the public high school and its significant contribution to many American youth, the depression years preceding the war revealed certain inadequacies in its program. . . . As a nation we prided ourselves on the attainment of free and universal education. Many citizens were shocked by the reports of youth studies which indicated that the high schools never enrolled more than two-thirds of the youth of secondary school age. The thousands of boys and girls, unwanted by business and industry, who were completely unoccupied during the depression years emphasized the problem. The high school

> society's principal youth-serving agency had no program which could attract them or serve their needs.[1]

John H. Fischer was chairman of the American Association of School Administrator's Commission which prepared the 1958 yearbook, *The High School in a Changing World.* The commission began:

> This volume goes to the printer in November 1957 when the American people are making a fresh appraisal of all their public services, including education. They are doing this in the light of startling new evidence, flung into the sky, of Russian scientific progress. . . . The value system, which has long been the foundation of American education, continues to stand. The proper business of American schools is not to change course in confusion at every fresh alarm but, in full awareness of the tensions and the promise of our times, to pursue with foresight and resolution the historic purposes to which our people are committed.[2]

And, Lawrence A. Cremin wrote of the history of progressive education in *The Transformation of the School.* Earlier, Cremin had written on "The Problem of Curriculum Making: An Historical Perspective," in the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's 1956 yearbook, *What Shall the High Schools Teach?*[3]

In these two lectures, I will look at secondary school reform both in retrospect and in prospect. First, I will discuss briefly a number of reports which, in the evolution of our secondary schools, add up to a long history of continuous criticism and advocacy of reform in purpose and program. It is clear that American educators have always believed that our high schools could be better and different from what they are. No matter how intense the criticism, high schools are viewed as making a significant contribution to the transition of youth to adulthood. This tension between what the schools do and what

educators think they can do is reflected in the rhetoric of the reports. A review of these reports sets the stage for the current calls for restructuring secondary education. Second, I would like to examine the current spate of reports calling for change so that we can appraise the prospects for secondary school reform.

The publication of the report of the Committee of Ten on Secondary School Studies in 1893 is usually described in histories of education as the watershed in secondary education. In the eight decades since then, we have witnessed a parade of committees, groups, and individuals which have been critical of the purposes and practices of high schools and have consistently pressed for reforms—some major and some minor. Throughout this same period, the American high school has been described as unchanging, static, and unbending.

In the past few years, there have been a number of reports —as many as eight or ten—which set forth the shortcomings of the high schools of today, examine the nature and causes of the problems of educating and socializing youth, and propose policy and program changes which, if ever implemented, would affect all of the institutions and agencies serving youth as well as society generally. Once again, as has been occurring almost continuously since the turn of the century, America is being pressed to reform secondary education. It is this continuous press for reform which I would like to examine—in retrospect and in prospect.

SOME CURRENT CRITICISMS OF THE HIGH SCHOOL

Current criticisms of secondary education, the bases for reform proposals, range far and wide—from a questioning of the basic objectives of youth education, to misgivings as to whether a single institution such as the high school can provide "a complete environment giving all the necessary opportunities for becoming an adult," to concerns about the nature and

relevance of curriculum, to apprehension about violence and vandalism preventing schools from functioning at all, to reconsideration of the roles and the exercise of power among various groups involved in educating youth.

The National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education, established by the Kettering Foundation, saw as one of the sources of the problems of the high schools "society's insistence on sudden and traumatic changes in their missions." As the commission observed:

> The American comprehensive high school today must be viewed as an establishment striving to meet the complex demands of society in the throes of social change, at a time when the school system has become too large an institution and is literally overrun with a mix of young people from inconsistent social backgrounds. This is a difficult circumstance. The pressure of these forces exhausts the strength of the high school as an organized institution.[4]

The National Panel on High Schools and Adolescent Education, established by the United States Office of Education, concluded that the high school was still failing to respond adequately to the needs of individual students. The panel noted:

> . . . increased public awareness that the high school, as an institution, is not merely inappropriate for a growing number of students. It is increasingly ill-matched to many, possibly a growing majority, of its present adolescent population who are either too old or too mature to live under the routine controls and strictures of a large high school without serious disturbances to them and to the school.[5]

The National panel was critical of the notion that the processes of youth education had to occur in one institution, the high school, if they were to be accredited and recognized.

The panel was concerned that the almost complete absorption of teenage adults into the high school has resulted in a decoupling of the generations. The Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee was also concerned with the segregation and isolation of youth—a segregation which "facilitates the specialization of activities in society, but . . . inhibits the experience of youth in incidental activities that form everyday life, and thus the learning that accompanies those activities."[6]

Smith and Orlosky viewed the situation in which youth are denied association with adults in the significant areas of social functions as:

> . . . a situation of which [society] is scarcely aware, and yet one that rivals in the gravity of its ultimate consequences the discrimination against minorities and the hazards of environmental disruption. It is the breakdown of the processes of socialization resulting in an increasing dissipation of the productive potential of youth and their moral fiber. The youth of all social classes, of the cultural majority no less than the minorities, are being squandered in idle dissipation, assigned to martyrdom by isolation and monotony.[7]

Gross and Osterman described the American high school as "the most absurd part of an educational system pervaded by absurdity." Noting that by 1970 serious student disruptions had occurred in more than two-thirds of all urban and suburban schools and in more than half the rural high schools, Gross and Osterman observed that the three issues most often cited and the basis for major complaints were irrelevance, racism, and authoritarianism. Irrelevance had to do with curriculum:

> The ideas . . . that study involves devoting oneself to boring or uninteresting subjects of the teacher's choosing, that good grades equal good education, and that studying hard

> to pass exam after exam is a worthwhile expenditure of energy and spirit—all are typical of the ideas which inform most high-school curricula. Equally outdated is the idea that there is a given body of knowledge all students should learn. The world has changed too much—there are too many disciplines to make an arbitrary judgment about which are important. . . . Students are insisting that the curricula grow out of their own interests and concerns, that they be permitted to choose which path into learning to take.[8]

As for racism, Gross and Osterman observed that:

> If schools seem irrelevant to the middle-class white student, they are not even within the sphere of comprehension for the black student facing the same curriculum. Add to this persistent rate of failure and irrelevant curriculum the contempt which many teachers and administrators feel toward black students, the fact that most inner city schools are controlled by whites, and the racial tension which pervades every aspect of our society—and the reason for the explosiveness of the city high schools becomes apparent.[9]

Wittes discussed the issue of authoritarianism in terms of "students' reactions to feelings of being over-controlled and impotent in the face of bureaucratic processes, of rules, customs, and procedures which govern their lives."[10] And Kohl found an "obsession with power and discipline everywhere; for most American children there is essentially one public school system. . . . and it is authoritarian and oppressive. Students everywhere are deprived of the right to make choices concerning their own destinies."[11]

In recent years, a number of radical critics (e.g., Goodman, Friedenberg, Kozol, Holt, and others) have viewed "true learning" and healthy growth as sabotaged "because of the authoritarian atmosphere in which emphasis is on the teacher teaching rather than on the student learning. . . . There is no real regard for the students as individual people, with real concerns

of their own and inherent drives to know, understand, and create."[12]

From interviews with 1,000 thirty-year-olds, representing a national cross-section sample which had been studied periodically since 1960 as part of the *Project Talent* population, seven areas of major concern for the nation's high schools emerged. The so-called "glaring shortcomings" identified by the interviewees included: (1) grossly inadequate vocational guidance, (2) too many harmful teachers, (3) lack of individualized instruction, (4) inadequate curriculum, (5) lack of personal support, (6) too few alternative ways to learn, and (7) ineffective education for citizenship in a democratic society. A sizeable group viewed the schools as utterly failing to assist them in developing goals and plans: "Lack of knowledge of their own interests, abilities, and values and their relationships to the requirements for various types of educational programs and career activities resulted in much wasted time, lack of motivation, and personal frustration."[13] While 60 percent of the men and 50 percent of the women reported one or more teachers having contributed negatively to the quality of their lives, they reported that they did "respect and appreciate even more in retrospect those teachers who were hard taskmasters and who insisted on each student working and learning and took the trouble to review the work of all students and correct their errors."[14]

There are many other areas of criticism of today's secondary schools. These include the quality of the teaching staff—not only the nature of their initial preparation and continuing development, but the absence of accountability and the growing organizational strength and exercise of power gained through collective bargaining agreements and political alignments. The areas include a myriad of issues concerning testing and evaluation—not only a concern with a national decline in SAT scores, but also controversy about the use of group intelligence tests, the effectiveness of various standardized tests

with minority group students, and the desirability of minimal standard performance testing on a state- or system-wide basis. They include a continuing concern with vocational education which had become a dominant educational issue by 1907, had received a new stimulus with the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963, and had acquired a new set of problems and issues with the launching of the "career education" movement by the USOE (responsibility has since been transferred to the National Institute of Education). These include questions about the relationships of the schools to other youth-serving institutions and agencies, the use of community resources for teaching and learning, and the utilization of mass media for instruction. They include serious questions about the continuation of present compulsory attendance laws and the creation of alternatives and optional paths to acquiring the credentials society requires. And finally, the issues surrounding questions of equality and inequality in education have been debated more vigorously than ever before. In short, all aspects of education and schooling are being reexamined and reanalyzed, and proposals for change and reform are being advanced.

SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORM: IN RETROSPECT

In his "Editor's Introduction" to Julius Sachs' 1914 publication, *The American Secondary School and Some of Its Problems*, Nicholas Murray Butler suggested that "The American people will find it to their advantage to direct an increasing amount of attention to the secondary school, its function and its problems."[15] Butler saw the task of the elementary school defined with reasonable clarity and certainty—"of necessity" as he put it—but felt that the task of the high school was less well understood. For Butler:

> The work of the secondary school is of a kind that necessitates differentiation and a choice between different pro-

> grams of study and between different, sometimes competing, educational ends and aims. The secondary school must exist in sufficient elasticity of method to enable it to adapt itself to the needs of a complex social organism.[16]

In American society, Butler saw the high school having to perform another "vitally important" function, namely that of training "those who, by a process of natural selection, are marked out for leadership in their several communities."[17]

The *Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies*, the Committee of Ten, published in 1893, was widely discussed and hotly debated by school and college people for many years—primarily by subject matter teachers and admissions officers who felt they had been slighted somehow by the recommendations for electives (modern academic subjects were to be as acceptable for college admission as the classics) and for an "equality" of subjects. Although the committee was appointed to study the demands for more uniformity in college admissions, the bulk of the report consists of the recommendations of bodies of experts in nine subject areas detailing curriculum. The committee proposed four alternative programs—classical, Latin-scientific, modern languages, and English. The subject experts spelled out in some detail what was to be taught, when to begin, how often, and for how long. For example, the English report recommended "the reading of certain masterpieces of English literature, not fewer in number than those at present assigned by the Commission of New England Colleges, should be required."[18]

The committee declared flatly that the preparation of a small percentage of graduates for college was not the principal purpose of the public high schools. Rather,

> Their main function is to prepare for the duties of life that small proportion of all children in the country—a proportion small in number, but very important to the welfare of the nation—who show themselves able to profit by an

> education prolonged to the eighteenth year, and whose parents are able to support them while they remain so long at school.[19]

Thus, the committee declared that the secondary school program must be designed primarily for students whose education was to be terminal with the high school, but argued that preparation for college was really the best preparation for life: "every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it, no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease."[20] The committee also held that the chief purpose of education was to train the mind. Throughout the report there are statements that a subject is "an instrument for training the mind to habits of intellectual consciousness, patience, discrimination, accuracy, and thoroughness—in a word, to habits of clear and sound thinking." Each of the committees of experts urged that some elements of their subjects—perspective views or broad surveys—should be taught earlier and offered in the elementary schools so that the high schools could take the same subjects up in more detail. The report deplored the existence of short information courses, which touched on a subject superficially, and proposed coherent courses of two or more years. The committee also emphasized the need for better prepared teachers.

There is some question about how influential the Committee of Ten report really was—the differences stemming from the criteria of influence being applied. Cremin saw the acceptance given the report as overwhelming with most schools having moved into line behind the proposals within a decade after publication. Yet, he points out, "in this very same period, political, economic, and social changes of the first magnitude were beginning to occasion new demands on the school—demands destined to alter the outlook of 1893."[21]

In the next two decades or so, the National Education Association appointed six other national committees. The Committee on College-Entrance Requirements (1897) declared the principle of election but found unlimited election inadvisable. The committee proposed a set of constants (four years of foreign languages, two of mathematics, two of English, one of history, and one of science) to be taken by all students with the remaining six units to be filled out by electives. That committee also urged a "unified six-year high school course of study beginning with the seventh grade." The Committee of Nine on the Articulation of High School and College (1911) was charged with urging the colleges to drop the entrance requirements of two foreign languages and accept instead all subjects which were "well taught in the high school." The Committee of Nine went beyond its charge and discussed the purposes of the high school as including good citizenship, vocational education, and attention to the needs of students who were not college bound. Thus, some aspects of the Committee of Nine's report were harbingers of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education's report in 1918. As for these NEA committees, Briggs dismissed them as having "made little contribution to the solution of the problem of what the secondary school should attempt to do and what means it should use." He urged that criticism of these committees not be too severe "for they reported on their assignments, which evidenced that the profession was more interested in the mechanics of education than in education itself."[22]

One important report which emerged in 1909 from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching established what came to be known as the *Carnegie unit*. The Carnegie or *standard unit* represented an effort to regularize high school "credits" on the basis of classroom hours and to enable calculation of college entrance requirements quantitatively. It was assumed "that a satisfactory year's work in any major subject cannot be accomplished in less than 120

sixty-minute hours, or their equivalent." As Krug put it, "Thus was the unit sent forth on its long and controversial mission in the annals of American schooling."[23] For the next half century, the Carnegie unit did indeed exercise considerable influence on standardizing curriculum in secondary schools.

At the turn of the century, incidentally, almost three-fifths of the high school population was female. Julius Sachs, writing on "Coeducation in the United States" declared that it was " 'little short of monstrous' that boys in high school received 'almost all of their intellectual and moral impulse from female teachers.' "[24] and this was a major reason for boys dropping out of school.

The Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education was appointed in 1913 but did not issue its report, the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*, until 1918. This commission, according to Briggs, *did* concern itself with education. Cremin has pointed out that:

> An expanding industrialism, a changing immigration, and a vigorous democracy exerted fundamental new demands on American schools between 1893 and 1918. Equally important in the evolving pedagogy of the era, however, were changes in the conception of the school itself—of its relationship to society and to the individuals who attended it.[25]

The important word in the commission's title was *reorganization*. Secondary education, the report argued, "should be determined by the needs of the society to be served, the character of the individuals to be educated, and the knowledge of educational theory and practice available."[26] The commission detailed changes in society (as citizen, as worker, and as independent personality, the individual required a higher degree of intelligence and efficiency), in the secondary school population (aside from the numerical increase with the high school population having doubled each year since 1890, the

students differed in "widely varying capacities, aptitudes, social heredity, and destinies in life"), and in educational theory and practice (knowledge about individual differences in capacities and aptitudes, reexamination of the subjects and methodologies as related to "general discipline," and concern with the application of knowledge). The evidence was strong, the commission asserted, that a comprehensive reorganization of secondary education was imperative.

All education in the United States, the commission declared, should be guided by a clear conception of the meaning of democracy: "Education in a democracy, both within and without the school, should develop in each individual the knowledge, interests, ideals, habits, and powers whereby he will find his place and use that place to shape both himself and society toward ever nobler ends."[27] The main objectives of secondary education, determined by an analysis of the individual as he functions normally in a variety of reference groups, were: health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character. These objectives applied not only to secondary education, but to elementary and higher education as well.

Thus, the commission stressed the preparation of students for social responsibility in a democratic society. Butts has pointed out that the report shifted:

> . . . the emphasis in schooling away from preoccupation with the academic and intellectual disciplines and [broadened] the social role of education almost beyond recognition. The "constants" were now to be thought of in terms of the common social needs and activities required of all individuals rather than the subject matter to be mastered; the variations and electives appropriate to differing individuals could be served in connection with vocation and leisure.[28]

The commission had appointed a series of subject-matter committees to flesh out from their respective fields what should be taught. The report asserted that every subject now taught

in the high school was in need of extensive reorganization so that it might contribute more effectively to the seven objectives—"the place of that subject in secondary education should depend upon the value of such contribution." Of course, the commission did not demand that every subject contribute to all seven objectives to the same degree.

Secondary education had to fill two functions: one of specialization "whereby individuals may become effective in the various vocations and other fields of human endeavor," and the other of unification, the attainment "of those common ideas, common ideals, and common modes of thought, feeling, and action that make for cooperation, social cohesion, and social solidarity." Specialization called for a wide range of subjects, opportunities for exploration and guidance, adaptation of content and method, flexibility of organization and administration, and differentiated curriculums. Unification called for direct studies (especially in the social studies and English), organization, and administration of the school to provide for social mingling and student participation in common activities which provide for a large measure of responsibility. The report urged that all normal students be encouraged to stay in high school until age eighteen—on a full-time basis if possible or part-time if not. The commission declared that "the comprehensive (sometimes called composite or cosmopolitan) high school, embracing all curriculums in one unified organization, should remain the standard type of secondary school in the United States."[29]

In concluding its report, the commission called attention to the seventeen additional reports in which the principles were supposedly applied to the various aspects of secondary education. Again, Briggs observed that these subject matter reports almost entirely failed in their assignments: "Either they did not comprehend the definitions and recommendations of the commission or they did not have the time and the ingenuity to propose exemplification."[30]

Contrasting the Report of the Committee of Ten with that of the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education, Cremin observed:

> Formerly, when the content and purpose of secondary education had been fairly well defined, equal opportunity meant the right of all who might profit from secondary education as so defined to enjoy its benefits. Now, the "given" of the equation was no longer the school with its content and purposes but the children with their backgrounds and needs. Equal opportunity now meant simply the right of all who came to be offered something of value, and it was the school's obligation to offer it. The magnitude of this shift cannot be overestimated; it was truly Copernican in character.[31]

In secondary school reform, the report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education is perceived as having begun a new era, for what the commission proposed was a different conception of what the secondary school was and what it should be doing.

Fourteen years later, with the nation well into the Great Depression with its consequent economic, social, and political upheavals, the Department of Secondary School Principals appointed a Committee on the Reorientation of Secondary Education under the chairmanship of Thomas H. Briggs. The committee was charged with presenting a clear-cut statement of the functions and purposes of secondary education. The committee divided its task and issued two reports--one dealing with *Issues of Secondary Education* (1936) and the other, *Functions of Secondary Education* (1937).[32] Briggs saw his committee as being the first professional group which considered the unanswered questions in the philosophy of secondary education and then set out definite functions for secondary education. The committee observed that the high schools exhibited almost all of the fundamental defects which charac-

terize any enterprise which has been permitted to grow practically fortuitously. More specifically, the committee asserted that secondary education "now, as in the past, is guided as a whole, by no clearly formulated plan; it rests on no carefully conceived and fully envisaged educational philosophy; it has achieved no consistent standards by which to evaluate its own endeavors."[33] What was needed was an intelligent, comprehensive, and long-sighted plan, something more than the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education.*

Each of ten issues was stated and the arguments pro and con each alternative were presented. The commission then left their resolution to the public, although its own position was made clear with respect to each of the issues. The issues were of this order:

2. Shall secondary education seek to retain all pupils in school as long as they wish to remain, or shall it transfer them to other agencies when, in the judgment of the school authorities, these agencies promise to serve better the pupils' immediate and probable future needs?
3. Shall secondary education provide a common curriculum for all, or differentiated offerings?
4. Shall secondary education include vocational training, or shall it be restricted to general education?
8. Shall secondary education present merely organized knowledge, or shall it also assume responsibility for attitudes and ideas?[34]

The second report, *Functions of Secondary Education*, detailed each of the ten functions, together with a discussion. These functions served as the basis for several later reports of the National Education Association including its Educational Policies Commission's *Education for ALL American Youth.*

The Progressive Education Association established its Commission on the Relation of School and College in 1933 to im-

prove coordination of school and college work and to enable secondary schools to undertake major program revisions. The commission initiated what came to be called the "Eight-Year Study" in 1932, with 30 high schools (one withdrew later) and 300 colleges putting aside the normal subject and unit requirements for admission to college. The Eight-Year Study represented perhaps the most comprehensive and potentially significant curriculum study ever undertaken. Careful evaluation procedures were devised to measure the success in college of graduates from the experimental schools. The contribution to the field of evaluation alone, in the eyes of some educators, made the study worth undertaking for the committees specified the objectives in terms of behaviors and then devised techniques and procedures for gathering data on these behaviors. The evaluation compared 1,475 matched pairs of students—one each from a traditional school and an experimental school—with respect to a variety of behaviors in college. Not only did the experimental school students do better than those who came from more traditional programs, but those who came from the more experimental schools showed even greater differences. Findings of the study which terminated in 1941 were presented in a series of five volumes which described the overall study, the curricular modifications undertaken by the schools, the evaluation procedures, the success of the high school graduates in college, and the story of one school's experience as seen by its students.[35]

There has been much speculation as to why the Eight-Year Study did not have the impact which might have been expected from an experiment of this design and magnitude and with such outcomes as emerged. One possibility is that the results were published in 1942 just as the United States had entered World War II and, when the war was over, conditions had so altered as to cause the profession and the public to fail to appreciate the results. In any event, when Redefer

visited each of the thirty schools eight years later, he found that little remained of the experimental programs.[36]

Two major surveys were conducted during the 1930s—the National Survey of Secondary Education (1932) and a study of the conditions and attitudes of 16- to 24-year olds in Maryland by the American Council on Education's American Youth Commission. In 1951, Briggs characterized these as "the two great tragedies in modern history of secondary education." As he put it, "the National Survey labored under the obsession, highly popular two decades ago, that the collection of data, presented in tables and graphs with medians, modes and probable errors calculated with unnecessary niceness, was of paramount importance." The twenty-eight volumes of the National Survey now repose, Briggs observed, "in impotence on library shelves."[37]

Although Briggs viewed the American Youth Commission study as a tragedy because of its statistical nature, the study was tragic in a very different sense. The report, *Youth Tell Their Story*,[38] presented a picture of the conditions and attitudes of some 13,528 Maryland youth who perceived that the schools and the economic structure had failed to meet their needs. There was a pervasive dissatisfaction with schooling in general and an indication that technical training and vocational guidance were needed. The study showed that the schools had failed to serve as vehicles for social mobility—socioeconomic status, race, and sex were the outstanding factors that affected the amount of schooling youth received. Vigorous social action was called for in the areas of education, employment, and recreation, with the commission urging "the development of a national program of constructive and profitable activity for its youth."[39]

In 1938, the results of the New York State Board of Regents' Inquiry in the Character and Cost of Public Education were published in a general report accompanied by ten supporting volumes. The charge of the Regents was for a critical

study of the entire educational enterprise of the state, its outcomes, methods, and costs and for the formulation of long-range policies and programs for dealing with the problems and issues identified. The inquiry concluded that the educational system had "not yet adjusted its program to carry the new load by the coming into the schools, particularly the secondary schools, of all the children of all the people, with their many new and different needs" and that the programs had "not been redesigned to fit [students] for the new and changing work opportunities which they must face in modern economic life."[40] If the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*'s main objectives had been accepted, the schools of New York State had simply not "been replanned to meet the new conditions of modern life and new ways of living, in which the family, the church, and early work now exercise less influence, and in which increasing leisure in later life calls for, and makes possible, a rich and growing inner life." In *Education for American Life*, and in several supporting volumes, the Regents' inquiry spelled out a secondary school program which would encompass grades seven through twelve; would make general education the central objective of the program by stressing through grade twelve the study of general science, human relations, community life, world history, general mathematics, and the arts; would "make understanding and enthusiasm for the democratic system part of character education"; and would include vocational education which emphasized broad vocational training rather than the development of specialized skills as part of the program of every comprehensive high school. Presumably the study became the basis for redesigning education in New York State and, by virtue of being commercially published, received wide distribution across the country.

Toward the end of World War II, the NEA's Educational Policies Commission published a volume titled *Education for ALL American Youth* which stemmed "from a firm conviction on the part of the . . . Commission that the extension, adapta-

tion, and improvement of secondary education is essential both to the security of our American institutions and to the economic well-being of our people." The commission decided "to dig beneath statements of general principles and to suggest in some detail how approved principles can be carried out in practice."[41] Two secondary school programs—one for American City and the other for Farmville—were indeed described with the schools encompassing grades seven through fourteen. In an accompanying publication, *Planning for American Youth*, the Department of Secondary School Principals summarized and popularized the EPC volume and added a list of ten "Imperative Educational Needs of Youth." The curriculum of American City's schools included four divisions of learning, designated as "common learnings, vocational preparation, individual interests, and health and physical education," aimed at providing a balanced program to help students grow in the areas described in the *Cardinal Principles. Eduation for ALL American Youth* was revised and reissued in 1952 with minor changes to remove the anachronisms which had emerged since the war's end. Communities could have schools as good as American City's and Farmville's if they would but demand them and see that they were brought into existence. Caswell thought it "improbable that national or regional committee reports—even such an admirable report as *Education for ALL American Youth*—can be the primary source of actual change." Change, he asserted, "rests with the individual school—with a principal and a group of teachers working with the problems of a given community and its youth —to do the job."[42]

Concern with the inadequacy of vocational education had been voiced continuously since the turn of the century and passage of the Smith-Hughes Law in 1917, with its provisions for federal aid in home economics, agriculture, trade and industrial subjects in the high schools; the act did little to resolve the issues. The George-Dean Act of 1937 added provi-

sions for distributive education, but the arguments concerning a separate vocational education system vis-à-vis vocational education in the comprehensive school accelerated. In January 1944, the Vocational Division of the USOE undertook a study of "Vocational Education in the Years Ahead." Some sixteen months later, a conference was convened to discuss the study. The meeting is remembered not for its discussion of vocational education in the postwar period, but for the beginnings of the life-adjustment education movement. Asked to summarize the conference, Charles A. Prosser (who had served earlier as lobbyist for the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education) introduced what has since come to be known as the "Prosser Resolution." That resolution expressed the belief that, with the aid of the conference report, the vocational schools would be better able to prepare 20 percent of secondary school youth to enter desired skilled occupations, and that high schools would continue to prepare another 20 percent for college entrance. It was the middle 60 percent which were not "receiving the life adjustment training they need and to which they are entitled as American citizens," and they were not likely to "unless and until the administrators of public education with the assistance of the vocational leaders formulate a similar program for this group."[43] The call was for regional conferences to consider the reforms needed in curriculum, guidance provisions, and opportunities for work experience, and the life-adjustment education movement was launched. Cremin has commented: "Of all the postwar refinements of progressive education . . . none achieved the publicity, or indeed the notoriety, of the so-called life-adjustment movement."[44] The movement soon came under sharp attack and even ridicule and the term "life adjustment" faded away, although the basic problems which the Prosser Resolution had tried to address clearly remained to be solved.

Two commissions on Life Adjustment Education for Youth were appointed for three-year terms each, but no new com-

mission was appointed in 1954 due, to a large extent, to the attacks made on life-adjustment education and on progressive education generally. Arthur Bestor was in the vanguard of critics of progressive education and life-adjustment education which he described as being at the very root of America's educational ills. In his *Restoration of Learning*, he called for reform by returning to the basic academic disciplines, by focusing education on systematic intellectual training, and by returning teacher training to the academic scholars (cutting it loose from the "interlocking directorate" of school administrators, education professors, and state department bureaucrats).[45]

The launching of Russia's Sputnik in October 1957 opened the floodgates of criticism of America's educational system, especially the high schools where the "watering down" of the curriculum was perceived as a central cause for America's runner-up status in the space race. Admiral Rickover became one of the most vocal spokesmen not only for abolishing all signs of progressive and life-adjustment education, but for questioning the very existence of the comprehensive high school as the prototype institution for serving America's needs. Even before Sputnik, in February 1957, James B. Conant was invited by the Carnegie Corporation of New York to undertake a study of the comprehensive high school—to determine whether it could meet its responsibility, as John W. Gardner put it, "for providing good and appropriate education, both academic and vocational, for all young people within a democratic environment which the American people believes serves the principles they cherish."[46]

Conant's response in his report, *The American High School Today*, was that the comprehensive high school could indeed meet that responsibility and that "no radical alteration in the basic pattern of American education is necessary in order to improve our public high schools."[47] (Gardner wrote: "When a man like James Conant says it *can* be done, the nation must take notice."[48]) Conant did propose some twenty-one recom-

mendations, some of which were not unlike those of the reports of the Committee of Ten and the Harvard University Committee on the Objectives of General Education in that they specified what subjects should be studied and for how long. Conant's recommendations gave particular attention to the "academically talented" students (the top 15 percent) and to the "highly gifted" (the top 3 percent) since Sputnik had triggered questions about the comprehensive high school's capability for meeting America's needs for trained brainpower. In retrospect, aside from hastening the closing or consolidation of small schools and adding to the number of guidance counselors, Conant's report brought little reform to American secondary education. Too many boards of education and school administrators were able to justify their programs as meeting "Conant's standards." Two years later, in a report titled *Slums and Suburbs*, Conant turned his attention to the particular problems of the inner city high schools and the surrounding suburbs, urging that youth in the former be provided with "marketable skills" while those in the latter be counseled to aspire to other than the most prestigious colleges.[49]

The post-Sputnik period ushered in what has since become known as the "Era of Curriculum Innovation." The National Defense Education Act of 1958 provided funds for upgrading the teaching of science, mathematics, and foreign languages through content revision, development of instructional materials, and training of teachers. The act also provided for improved guidance and counseling, especially in the high schools. The National Science Foundation increased its support for projects to improve course content in science and mathematics. Various foundations invested heavily in projects to upgrade instruction. The 1960s were marked by projects in practically all subject areas which produced new curricula, instructional resources, organization, technology, teacher training, and personnel deployment patterns. The report of a conference of scientists, mathematicians, and psychologists at Woods Hole,

The Process of Education, argued that the "structures of the disciplines" should be the basis for formulating school curriculum, and this publication became the guide for many curriculum committees and commissions.[50] How much impact the frenetic activities of the curriculum projects of the 1960s have had on America's high schools is being argued still. Charles Silberman observed that "the reform movement had produced innumerable changes, and yet the schools themselves are largely unchanged."[51] A Ford Foundation study concluded that its $30 million investment in school innovations had had few lasting or significant results: Most innovations seemed to wither when the charismatic promoter moved elsewhere or external funding was reduced.[52]

In the 1960s the civil rights movement and the so-called "war on poverty" focused attention on the failure of the schools to provide adequately for various minority groups and the children of the poor. It was not that the selective nature of the high school had been ignored before this—George S. Counts published a study titled, *The Selective Character of Secondary Education* in 1922, and there were a number of other studies such as *Elmtown's Youth*, *Middletown*, and *Yankee City*.[53] But, a new awareness of social problems and the passage of federal legislation, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, brought the questions of quality education and provision of equality of educational opportunity to the central attention of professional and community groups alike.

When student dissent and unrest spread to the high schools from the colleges in the late 1960s, cries of "curricular irrelevance" and "inhumane constraints" triggered still another reassessment of the goals, structure, operations, and control mechanisms in the high schools. Proposals for reform ranged from minor tinkering (i.e., provide for a pass/fail option) to deschooling society. When Charles Silberman published *Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education* in 19[illegible] he aimed at the widest possible audience to bring about

reform. In answer to the question whether American education was a success or failure, Silberman concluded that it was both: "In almost every area, improvements beyond what anyone thought possible fifty or twenty-five or even ten years ago have produced anger and anxiety rather than satisfaction."[54] Silberman expressed his indignation at the failures of the schools, their "mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self," and blamed this situation on mindlessness, "the failure or refusal to think seriously about educational purpose, the reluctance to question established practice."[55] This failure seems in sharp contrast with a continuous refining of purpose, not only by committees at the national level whose reports are discussed here, but by various professional groups (e.g., National Council of Teachers of English, Foreign Language Association, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals) and by non-educational groups (such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund Panel and the President's Commission on National Goals). Was the gap between the rhetoric of the reports and the reality of change that wide? Have reports of this kind made a difference in program and practice at the local level? Did they change the high schools?

In 1924, Counts wrote:

> Changes in high school practice have by no means kept pace with the changing character of secondary education. Although magnificent and costly buildings have been erected, although many new subjects have been added to the curriculum, and although the social life of the school has been developed and enriched, the basic traditions and practices of the high school remain essentially unchanged. . . . Obviously there is a need for modification in practice as radical as the change in the powers, interests, and futures of the children attending school.[56]

Secondary education continues to be in a state of transition. Until a short time ago, the high school population grew rapidly and the so-called holding power of the schools moved up steadily. Educators were satisfied that secondary education had become universal with the common school encompassing both elementary and high school. But high school enrollments increased in part as youth were denied work opportunities and as compulsory attendance laws were enacted. As Paul Mort put it in 1943:

> As the high school was tardily adjusted from a college preparatory school toward a people's college, we had interpreted increased attendance as a sign that our schooling was good. We had confused the effect with the cause. We had interpreted the phenomenon as holding power when at best it had been absorbing power. . . . We were lulled into satisfaction with the schooling we offered.[57]

That the American high school has expanded since the turn of the century both in size and function seems quite clear. The high school undertook functions which had formerly been handled by other agencies—the family, the community, the labor market, the religious institutions. Secondary education's growth was hailed as the "democratization of learning" and, increasingly, education became synonymous with schooling. There are those who do not view the developments in secondary education as democratizing in fact but rather as a continuation of the functions of providing workers for the industrial society and sorting individuals to guarantee the necessary leadership for society—*à la* Butler's view expressed in the Sachs book in 1914. The proposals for reform are seen by them simply as adjustments needed to meet changing societal conditions so that schools could efficiently serve as society's major social sorting mechanism. There are those who view the era between the 1890s and the 1920s as a "period of

fundamental bureaucratic and professionalistic reformation" as school people used the proposals for reform as a means for strengthening and solidifying their control of the schooling enterprise, causing the school to be increasingly isolated and insulated from other agencies and institutions.

There are still other views of the developments in secondary education over the past eighty years. Walter Doyle has observed that "in the past, educational historians saw the expansion of schools and the linkage with social and vocational benefits as evidence that the public school was necessary to ensure democracy."[58] Some historians, however, have argued recently that what emerged—and what was intended to emerge—is a schooling bureaucracy which "embodies middle-class biases and protects elite self-interests at the expense of providing effective educational experiences for all youth, especially the children of the poor."[59] My own view is that the public schools are indeed necessary to ensure democracy and have contributed toward that end to some extent, but that such assurance comes only with constant critiquing, pinpointing of shortcomings, and actual implementation of change—change which will inevitably be altered with further criticism.

The commission and committee reports were usually presented to conventions of educators and published by the associations, the Government Printing Office, or commercial publishers. Sizer points out that W.T. Harris prevailed on the Secretary of the Interior to print 30,000 copies of the report which were distributed free to key school and college people across the nation. Subsequently more than 17,000 copies were sold for thirty cents each by a commercial publisher. In addition to the report, hundreds of articles were published and the arguments were joined in the journals as well as the convention halls. In Sizer's view, the report of the Committee of Ten had two kinds of profound effects: "It influenced school programs and courses and (a less tangible effect) it exerted a broad general influence on school policy and the thinking of

educators." While schools did not adopt the committee's curricular recommendations completely, they made changes and the report, as with the Conant report seven decades later, "became a standard by which schools evaluated their own policies."[60]

Due to changes in society and education, the report's initial impact had clearly begun dissipating by the time the Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education was established in 1911. By 1929, the Bureau of Education had sold 110,000 copies of the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* published in 1918. Speaking at the convention of the Department of Superintendence in 1926, a principal observed that the seven objectives "were the most comprehensive ever written or conceived, but 'their transforming possibilities' were 'but feebly felt' in the 'fettered traditional high school.' "[61] Cremin has observed that "while cogent criticims over the years have called for refinements, further denotations and extensions of the *Cardinal Principles*, the statement has for close to four decades provided the orientation and terminologies for the development of secondary education."[62]

Surely the reports of the committees of the 1930s and 1940s were efforts to refine and extend the *Cardinal Principles* and to exhort implementation by schools. Schools still verbalize the seven aims in one form or another. In 1972, a National Goals Survey was undertaken by George Gallup for the National Commission on the Reform of Secondary Education. A sample of students, parents, teachers, and school administrators across the nation were asked to judge the importance of goals derived from thirty-seven state departments of education lists. The survey produced fourteen goals which, for the most part, paralleled those of the *Cardinal Principles.*

Since the 1890s we have had an almost continuous reappraisal of the purposes and functioning of America's high schools, always coupled with proposals for reform. The reports of the committees and commissions have resulted in

changes but hardly a drastic restructuring of the schools except in terms of the purposes. What the reports have done, for the most part, is to sensitize educators to changing conditions and needs in society and education, stirring some to tackle the programs on a local level. An examination of some of these reports in retrospect can provide a better perspective on the needs and proposals for reform with which the high schools are confronted today.

Former United States Commissioner of Education Sidney Marland sees the high school as "a troubled institution and the most likely arena of educational change for the balance of this decade. While there is dissatisfaction, frustration, and readiness for change throughout all of education, the opportunities for reform are especially timely in high school."[63] What are the criticisms of the current crop of commissions and committees and what do they say to us about reforming secondary education today? What are the prospects for reform in secondary education?

SECONDARY EDUCATION REFORM: IN PROSPECT

America's view of secondary education has been described as a "love-hate affair," sometimes approaching a high level of smugness with the accomplishments of the high school but simultaneously sharply critical of its failures. Gorman describes the high school "as American as the Constitution, baseball, or milkshake. It stands as one of the chief reminders of the American belief that there are no unimportant people, that every last individual—including the most humble and the apparently least endowed—counts." In contrast, a Ford Foundation officer has observed: "Not too many of us realize how bad American schools are from the point of view of humanity, respect, or dignity." And, while high schools increased their enrollments and holding power with ever-increasing proportions of graduates going on to some form

of post-secondary education, the failure to provide adequately for youth from poor and minority group families has brought forth charges of "educational genocide." Secondary educators often display a tension between their role as the professional stewards of schooling for youth and their role as social critics. Perhaps no other profession has within itself such propensities for self-criticism and self-defense as the American education profession.

Addressing secondary school principals in February 1975, U.S. Commissioner of Education Terrel H. Bell posed two basic challenges facing secondary education: One was a need for restructuring "to accommodate young people who are more mature, more capable of responsibility, more willing to begin the transition to adulthood than any other recent generation."[64] The second challenge was for high school educators "to get back in touch with the community and its many institutions that can and should contribute to the education of the young." Since 1972, we have had a number of reports aimed at reforming our high schools. Some proposals do call for major restructuring, while others deal with some single aspect of secondary education. These reports are in the tradition of national committee reports of the past. Elsewhere, I have examined and criticized the major reports published since 1972 and will not do that here.[65] Rather, my agenda here is to present and discuss the common threads woven into the recommendations for reform. An examination of their conclusions and recommendations for change suggests the areas which may well be considered for reform efforts by educators and communities.

The National Panel on High Schools and Adolescent Education (the National panel) was established by the USOE to provide a status report on secondary education, identify the kinds of reform needed, and describe the policy issues and research and development programs which would provide the knowledge needed for renewal. The panel concluded that ma-

jor problems exist in the high schools as a consequence of changing patterns of adolescent growth and development; that the institutions must become more flexible to respond to the shifting demands placed on them; that the schools have isolated adolescents both from adults and children, while having themselves become increasingly isolated from other institutions; that while the nation has nearly attained its egalitarian aim of universal secondary education, it has not created the reality of a comprehensive high school encompassing both "a range of educational purposes and an integrated social setting for all youth"; that so-called innovative efforts to respond to changing needs too often result in schools splintering "their curriculum into busywork" and drifting "deeper into an imposed custodial function that often drives the majority of students out of school shortly after the roll is taken"; and that vocational education is frequently so out of phase with real-life requirements that graduates are no more employable than are dropouts. The National panel argued that the goals of comprehensive education cannot all be attained inside the high schools nor should the responsibilities for comprehensive education be placed on the high school alone: "If the school is to be relieved of the sense of responsibility of solving most, if not all of the social ills and problems of the country, then it must find ways of sharing the time of students with other delivery systems."[66]

The Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee (the Coleman panel) focused on the period of transition from child to adult (the age period 14-24) and the institutions in which the transition takes place—the high school and college, both of which have replaced work settings in which youth was spent in earlier generations. The Coleman panel argued that schooling does not provide a "complete environment giving all the necessary opportunities for becoming adult." The school provides a particular kind of environment — "individualistic, oriented toward cognitive

achievement, imposing dependency on and withholding authority and responsibility from those in the role of students." When the period of schooling was short, with young people being brought into economic productivity as early as possible, then the school represented only a supplement to the main activities of growing up and thus mattered little. But, when schooling expanded to fill up the time which other activities—mainly work—had once occupied and youth were kept off the labor market, then "society's prescription for youth has been merely more of what was prescribed them as children: more school." The panel urged that we now move toward a new phase in our treatment of youth—a phase "including schooling but neither defined nor limited by it." And, it argued that "widely different objectives require different institutions, and the school is not adequate as a pervasive environment for all these objectives."[67]

As did the National panel, the Coleman panel raised a number of issues about the consequences of age segregation—segregation of youth from adults, children, and even other-aged youth by institutional grouping practices. Distinguishing between what the panel calls "self-development or learning activities" and "productive activities," the Coleman panel sees youth engaged almost completely in learning activities until formal schooling ends at which time there is an abrupt shift to productive-type activities. There is increasing evidence, the report noted, "that this pattern is not the best one for all youth, and perhaps is best for none." There are alternative patterns with different mixes of study and work, full- and part-time. The panel weighed the values of including non-academic activities in formal schooling and argued that the productive activities proposed are best developed outside the school. Finally, the report urged a reexamination of the legal status and rights of youth, suggesting that present legal protections in fact provide serious constraints on the transition of youth to productive adulthood.

The National Commission on the Reform of Secondary

Education (the Kettering commission) was established by the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. The Kettering Foundation also sponsored Task Force '74, a National Task Force for High School Reform. Kettering's National commission set forth six "conditions" which they saw affecting secondary schools and which have implications for reform. (1) The costs of operating high schools more than doubled in the preceding decade and the student populations came from diverse backgrounds. With the nation's population now at zero-growth, education, which had been the country's fastest growing enterprise, ceased expanding and became instead "the victim of an economy of declining populations." (2) In the past twenty years, what had been a major teacher shortage changed to a teacher surplus providing new conditions for selecting and training teachers with the high schools now exercising far greater influence in the design and implementation of teacher training programs. (3) A decade of innovation and experimentation in secondary education was perceived by the commission as having "had little or no lasting effect on the content of school programs or the quality of teaching and learning." (4) The high schools were described by the commission as "beleaguered institutions"—compulsory attendance laws are no longer working, tardiness and class cutting are rampant, and crime has become part of the normal experience of many high schools. (5) The schools' problems are compounded, the commission observed, by society insisting on sudden and traumatic mission changes. Presently, for example, the high schools are viewed as "striving to meet the complex demands of society in the throes of social change, at a time when the school system has become too large as an institution and is literally overrun with a mix of young people from inconsistent social backgrounds." (6) The commission noted but discounted efforts to eliminate high schools and to deschool society as simply "an exercise in scholarly discourse."[68]

The Kettering Commission's Task Force '74 examined

three issues which had been raised by the National commission and argued that if schools were to respond better to the students enrolled, four principles would have to be accepted and implemented. First, citizens and parents must become actively involved in forming policies, making decisions, and governing their schools. Second, students must be informed as to their rights and those rights must be assured through due process procedures. Third, education for responsibility must become the school's prime function, and such responsibility is best acquired through experiencing the relationship between actions and consequences. And, finally, a variety of alternative programs to the traditional high school must be tested and established, especially alternative work/study and youth service programs.

The California Commission for Reform of Intermediate and Secondary Education (the RISE commission) observed that "the unparalleled and tumultuous changes that have taken place in American society and in the character of American youth—particularly in the last three decades—are presenting public education today with a new and bewildering set of challenges."[69] Citing "the alarming statistics that . . . reveal the unstable social climate in which children are being raised today and the magnitude of some of the problems schools throughout California now face,"[70] the commission asserted there was a desperate need for comprehensive reform. The RISE commission rejected what it called the traditional view of schooling—"restricted to a piece of real estate where licensed adults teach and students passively learn during specified times of the day" and projected in its stead "a school system that takes place at many times and places in which both adults and young people work as teachers and learners . . . [one] that attracts, motivates, and satisfies young people."[71] In such a system, the commission observed, "society itself is at the core of schooling." The commission proposed a new learner, a new learning environment, a new emphasis

on learning, a new educator, and new resources and responsibilities—all designed "to create a flexible, challenging, and satisfying environment for learning that motivates young people to remain in school, strive for excellence, and pursue lifelong learning."[72]

The National Manpower Institute tackled the problem of education and work being "distinctively separate developments controlled by independent institutional sovereignties—with the consequence that in most people's lives learning and earning pass as totally isolated chapters."[73] The report asserts than an "education-work policy is not one that misconceives of education as having for its purpose the preparation of people for work" but rather "it *includes* this purpose as part of education's function of preparing people for life, of which work is one part; it takes full account of learning as a human value itself." Similarly, work should not be viewed in a narrow vocational sense but "it *includes* vocational values" with labor conceived of "not only as a unit of production but as a human value" as well.[74] The Institute Council raised serious questions about an educational norm of not ten years but fourteen to sixteen, suggesting that "it is by no means clear that what is now being covered can be best absorbed by every human system at one long sitting." The idea that "everybody should 'stay in school until you're finished,' " has already disintegrated, the report notes, "to the point that it is now held together mostly by a combination of administrative convenience and false parental pride and concern."[75] The Institute explored possible arrangements for youth to move out of school for a year or two or longer when appropriate to their development, and then move back in when that makes sense. The basic argument of the report is that education and work are not two worlds—one for youth and the other for adults; that no new and sufficient meaning of growth will result from building better bridges between schoolroom and employment office; and that what is needed is the development of a life-

time continuum of education and work opportunities. The report concerns itself, therefore, with alternative provisions for continuous self-renewal interspersing learning and the earning of a living.

In its deliberations, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education has studied the interrelationships between the schools and the colleges from many aspects. In an earlier report, *A Chance to Learn*, the commission had recommended that "the first priority in the nation's commitment to equal educational opportunity be placed upon the increased effectiveness of the nation's elementary and secondary schools."[76] In its recent report, *Continuity and Discontinuity: Higher Education and the Schools*, the commission discusses needed improvements in secondary education as these relate to school-college relationships. The key issue schools face, according to the commission, is the old but important one of freedom versus restraint: "The sharp swing of the pendulum toward freedom and relaxation of rules throughout the country has created an atmosphere in which the general public sees lack of 'discipline' as the most serious problem" confronting the schools. At the same time, liberal critics describe the schools as "among the most formal, hierarchic, and even authoritarian institutions in American life."[77] The report urged deliberate experimentation with a diversity of means for reaching common ends and a system of accountability for teachers and administrators. The commission suggested a review and analysis of the general educational requirements for graduation from high school, expanding the options, and linking of school and college studies to provide continuity. Questioning the historical domination of textbook writing by college faculty members, the commission suggested a national study "to seek ways to improve the system by which curricular materials are chosen, created, and marketed," including possible uses of educational technology.

The National Committee on Secondary Education of the

National Association of Secondary School Principals studied means for broadening options for youth in the 15-20 age bracket. The report urged promotion of the idea of *action learning*, "learning from experience and associated study that can be assessed and accredited by an educational institution."[78] Such experiential learning is to take place in settings other than the classroom, may involve paid or unpaid work or service, or personal performance, as in writing, art, drama or music. The National Commission on Resources for Youth is already implementing this concept.

The Educational Facilities Laboratory and I/D/E/A conference asserted that "though youth is no longer the same, and the world is no longer the same, high schools are essentially unchanged from what they were at the beginning of the century."[79] Youth live in two worlds—one inside the high school where every phase of their lives is dictated and the other outside where they are involved in decision making and exercise considerable self-determination. The report called for breaking the institutional mold and creating "a fresh organizational structure that will remove from the school some of its traditional functions and by so doing, inject new life into them. By placing these functions outside the school, there is a chance of freeing people to move beyond bureaucratic practice."[80]

The panels, commissions, and conference groups are not unlike their predecessors in issuing reports calling for reforming high schools; however, their membership appears broader in some cases. While earlier committees were dominated first by college personnel and later by school administrators, a few students, parents, teachers, representatives of labor and industry, and members of the general public are to be found on some of the modern committees. Male domination still persists and racial and ethnic minorities are still scarce. The current groups deliberated and studied anywhere from two to three days to a period of years. Special papers were commis-

sioned by some panels. Like their predecessors, a published report urging change has been the product. The number of recommendations range up to the thirty-two contained in the Kettering commission report. The specific recommendations vary from major radical proposals to others which seem quite mundane.

A NEW VIEW OF SECONDARY EDUCATION?

Writing in 1956 on the conditions and forces which had stimulated the then-current period of educational appraisal, Cremin expressed the thesis that the sweeping changes underway "*may well call for a new view of secondary education as different from the Cardinal Principles as were the Cardinal Principles from the ideas of the Committee of Ten.*"[81] There are proposals in the reports which purport to move toward a new view of secondary education, one focusing on education of youth rather than on a single institution, the American high school. There are some eleven common themes in the recommendations.

First, the objectives of youth education are broad and encompassing. When the reports are explicit as to the objectives of youth education, they set forth aims which are more like those areas in the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* than statements limited to the acquisition of cognitive skills and knowledge. The Coleman report, for example, details seven objectives in two broad classes: one essentially self-centered in that "it concerns the acquisition of skills that expand the personal resources, and thus the opportunity of a young person," and the other outwardly-directed in that it "concerns opportunity for responsibilities affecting other persons." The Kettering commission's National Goals Survey produced fourteen goals, seven of which were essentially the same as the health, command of fundamental processes, vocation, and civic education in the *Cardinal Principles.*

Second, there is consensus that the high school does not

and cannot provide a complete environment for youth education. The National panel proposed replacing "the unattained concept of the comprehensive high school with the more practical goal of providing comprehensive education through a variety of means including schools."[82] The task of the high school, the panel argued, should shift from one of teaching to one of arranging for delivery of services: "scheduling, evaluating, registering, monitoring and continuously communicating information on adolescent education"[83] to students, teachers, and the public. The National panel observed that an assumption which has shaped the high school is that "it could serve as a major if not sole instrument with which to cure our social ills" and that it alone (assuming a cooperative family) "could shape personalities, mold attitudes, raise ambitions, train skills, and impart knowledge in settings severely out of touch with other educational forces including the media and the peer culture."[84] Some 45 years ago, Counts observed that "the school is but one among many educational institutions, and its power can easily be exaggerated." Pointing to the family, the church and the synagogue, the press and the radio, the museum and the library, the cinema and the theater all as educative agencies, Counts cautioned that "a theory of education which is devoted altogether to what goes on in the school is surely to be lacking in reality and vitality."[85] The National panel asserted that we have overburdened our schools by imposing too many tasks but that "we know enough now to recognize that schools at best play a supplemental role with other agencies which affect youth; what is being advocated is that these be shaped into a system of comprehensive education."

Third, the age-segregation of youth must be overcome if they are to be provided a more complete environment for transition to adulthood. Several of the reports deal with the isolation of youth from both children and adults. The National panel asserted that "in prolonging youth's dependence we

have used our schools, inadvertently, as the social 'aging vats' that have isolated adolescents and delayed their learning adult roles, work habits, and skills."[86] That panel recommended reducing the isolation of adolescents by the creation of community-based learning centers for youth and adults, separate from the high school, and the inauguration of programs involving joint participation of adolescents and adults who would "learn by doing what is socially useful, personally satisfying, and health supporting for the individual and the community." The Coleman panel called for providing for role diversity for youth so that "the young person is not wholly occupied as a student but learns in ways that assist others and himself"; and for placing youth in a variety of settings outside the school concurrent with their continued schooling.[87]

Fourth, an effective education-work policy must be developed. The National panel recommended that youth be provided with real-jobs-with-real-work through a program which would emphasize job-knowledge, on-the-job training, occupational citizenship, and job placement. The Coleman panel proposed testing several pilot programs, including alternating school and work to provide a mixture of part-time work and part-time schooling in a variety of time cycles; reserving time within work organizations for formal instruction so that both adults and youth "would engage in a mixture of roles including learning, teaching and work"; establishing youth communities and youth organizations able to contract for providing public services paid for by the government; establishing residential youth communities in which adolescents provide "most of the services, have most of the authority, and carry out most of the responsibility"; and creating work opportunities through federally-funded public service programs. The National Manpower Institute recommended the designing of a better system for identifying manpower needs and career prospects for which education provides at least partial preparation; developing the concept of career education more fully by "infusing the general education process with various forms of exposure

to the meaning of work and service , making actual work or service experience an integral part of all youth's education; and facilitating a student's moving in and out of the educational sequence as it seems appropriate to the individual. Several reports urged reexamination of the barriers to youth for work and service, in both law and custom. Two reports proposed experimentation with a dual minimum wage, lower for young workers than for more mature ones. To develop and implement an effective policy, the National Manpower Institute advocated establishing a broad-based Community Education-Work Council. *Vocation*, one of the main objectives in the *Cardinal Principles*, looms large in all of the reports.

Fifth, citizenship education should be moved into the larger community while, at the same time, it is developed in school through exercise of students' rights and responsibilities. The National panel observed that the study of history, of the structure of government, or, more recently, of the methodology of the social scientists has developed "little technical proficiency in closing the gap between classroom study and an active citizenship." The panel recommended that education for citizenship be moved in large part into the community by regularly involving youth in social, political, and governmental agencies where they can practice citizenship skills. This involvement should, of course, be supplemented by the academic study of the social sciences and their distinct methodologies and should include seminars and classes in which the community experiences are mediated. The panel urged that the schools themselves become collateral training places for citizenship by creating new models for responsibility-taking by youth in the governance of the schools. The report suggests that schools be the *laboratories-for-error* in learning citizen roles: studied experiments "for learning the consequences of neglect, venality and the sense of power" should constitute the school's curriculum in citizenship. The Kettering com-

mission proposed that student exercise of such rights as due process would contribute to development of citizenship skills.

Sixth, a variety of educational options and alternative programs should be provided both within and outside the school with public financial support for students exercising choice among the alternatives. Within the school, Task Force '74 categorized the alternatives under two broad headings: one which includes the degree of structure, including use of space and allocation of time; the other includes curricular design and the student population served. The National panel suggested that alternatives might include, but not be limited to, "mini-schools, schools-without-walls, open schools, alternative schools, optimal programs, internships, parallel courses, independent study, free schools, and apprentice and action learning."[88] The Kettering commission saw the variety of alternatives "limited only by the legitimate needs of adolescents and the vivacity of the imagination of educational planners."[89] Two reports urged that community college programs be considered as another alternative, with students moving from one institution to the other. The reports suggest different time sequences—hourly, daily, weekly, and yearly—to provide greater flexibility. The Coleman panel proposed a change in school structure to include the development of genuine specialization among schools, including but not limited to academic specialties, and of free choice by youth to attend one or more such specialized schools simultaneously. The Kettering commission recommended that: "Every adolescent should, with proper guidance, be able to select those forms of schooling and learning most congenial to his basic learning style, philosophic orientation, and tastes."[90]

Seventh, the range and kinds of nonformal educational opportunities should be extended. The reports assert that the schools' obsession with credentialing and accreditation cause them to prefer formal education. Many of the alternative programs provide learning experiences in nonformal settings.

Action-learning programs move students out of the classroom and into the community where they engage in experiential learning. The Kettering commission urged that schools recognize "that authentic learning can take place in a wide variety of settings, many of them remote from the schoolhouse"[91] and that credit should be provided for nontraditional and nonformal learning experiences.

Eighth, compulsory attendance laws should be changed so as to lower the school-leaving age and individuals should be offered alternatives to the conventional twelve-year schooling pattern. The Kettering commission argued that if the high school is to avoid being a custodial institution, then adolescents must not be forced to attend. The earlier physical, sexual, and intellectual maturity of youth require "an option of earlier departure from the restraints of schooling." The commission urged lowering the formal school-leaving age to fourteen with other programs accommodating those who exercise this option and "employment laws should be rewritten to assure on-the-job training in full-time service and work."

The proposal to lower the compulsory attendance age to fourteen has such serious implications that a brief comment is warranted here. The Kettering commission declared: "By the age of fourteen, a student who has not developed some motivation toward learning is not likely to profit from compulsory schooling. Secondary education must drop its custodial burdens."[92] For some time now, the high school has been a viable alternative for many youth who otherwise would be exploited by industry or/and government or who had no other options. If 14-year olds are not turned on by educational programs, if they are problems for the staff and interfere with learning by their peers, then the educational processes need revision so that involvement and commitment to meaningful learning and development are enhanced. The possibility that schools will intensify their push-out efforts, ridding themselves of those who, as the commission puts it, "damage the learning envi-

ronment," could represent the ultimate educational cop-out. Unless real alternatives for learning are provided—and exploitation of youth in unskilled work experience is not a real option—then educators should focus on improving the total learning environment rather than making it possible for 14-year olds to leave for nonexistent, or even damaging, alternatives.

The Kettering commission proposed federal and state legislation that would entitle every citizen to fourteen years of tuition-free education, only eight of which would be compulsory. The remaining six years would be available to the individual for use at any stage of his life. The Coleman panel also advocated the use of educational vouchers from age sixteen which would be equivalent in value to the average cost of four years in college. These vouchers could be used for a wide range of skill training as well as higher education. The Coleman panel proposed placing the decision for further education and training in the hands of youth "who will themselves experience the consequences, and would likely encourage wiser management of one's affairs than do current institutions."[93] The National Manpower Institute recommended what it called "a considered break" wherein a student, with adequate counseling and guidance, would step out of the educational sequence for a year or two and then come back into it, receiving credit for the experience. The RISE commission proposed student furloughs "of flexible duration, of educational value to the learner, and consistent with the learner's educational needs and objectives."[94] The school would provide credit for the learner if he met specified objectives.

Ninth, the learning and teaching sources of school and community should be integrated. The high school is described as an encapsulated, isolated institution. As the National panel put it, "despite the numerous types of learning that can and frequently must take place in the community or the 'real world,' the only sanctioned educational experiences of most

12 to 18 year-olds are those which occur in the secondary school classroom."[95] School systems are urged "to identify, obtain, and utilize fully and effectively those physical and human resources in the community that can contribute to achieving learning objectives."[96] Included in these resources are a variety of learning materials, such as television, as well as such segments of the community as business, industry, labor, government, service agencies, and residents. The reports urge such integration be developed not just in terms of alternative programs but rather for the total educational process. In addition, development of ways for the community to use school resources would break down the barriers to a two-way flow.

Tenth, secondary education should be designed as an integral part in a lifetime continuum of education. There are various proposals for lifetime education, "alternating incidental and informal lifelong learning with more organized and intentional educational opportunities." The Kettering commission and Coleman panel proposals for broadly usable educational vouchers are aimed, in part, toward one kind of continuing education. The National Manpower Institute also advocated "the cost of up to four years of public education be made available for further education to any adult who has less than twelve years of formal schooling."[97]

Eleventh, the size of the high school should be drastically reduced and its functions made more specialized. The Coleman panel proposed that high schools should probably have not more than 500 students and that each school be genuinely specialized. Other reports, critical of the impersonal, bureaucratic, damaging environment of the large high school, advocate organizational arrangements such as the school-within-a-school as a means of reducing school size. The proposals for alternative programs are also aimed at creating different kinds of environments from that found in the traditional school. The National panel, emphasizing "the basic role of the high

school as society's only universal institution for the education of the intellect," hoped "that the removal of non-academic fat will result in a needed lean and hungry devotion to the development of a maturing intellect."[98] The panel proposed an academic day of two-to-four hours with every adolescent involved in one or more programs in settings away from the high school. In effect, several reports proposed a carving out of the responsibility for intellectual development for the high school with other agencies and institutions taking responsibility for other kinds of development. Work, citizenship education, and aesthetic education are among the areas for which nonschool agencies would be given greater responsibility, in coordination with the high school.

THE PROSPECT

There are other specific recommendations which deal with student and teacher accountability, school security, institutional sexism and racism, and community involvement, among others. However, the common themes in the various reports provide a clearer picture of what is being advocated in the way of restructuring secondary education. The main purposes of secondary education are generally being reaffirmed but the functions of secondary schools are being questioned. Viewing the present-day high school as an overburdened, beleaguered institution, sometimes on the verge of complete collapse, the various panels and committees have recommended that secondary educators, with community participation, assert leadership in the building of a system of youth education which uses more of the community's educative resources—including those of the high school. There are many educating and socializing agencies, some or many of which may be more influential than formal schooling in their developmental effects on youth. The reports propose reforming the schools by integrating the learning resources of school and community, by making available a wide variety of educational options and

program alternatives to attain educational objectives, by involving the school in providing valid and meaningful work experience for all, and by the school shedding some of its primary and ancillary functions.

While this general thrust of placing society itself at the core of schooling, as the RISE commission puts it, is rationalized in the reports, the details of implementation are generally untouched. School, the Kettering commission wrote, "must be not only 'where you find it,' but 'when you want it.' " Granted that a good deal of learning takes place in out-of-school settings, do all experiences in such settings provide authentic learning? What provisions need be made for mediating learning experiences? While the "range" of viable out-of-school learning experiences for adolescents is virtually limitless," as the National panel put it, they are neither equally valid nor meaningful nor necessarily better than those which take place in school settings. The short-lived fate of many alternative programs raises questions about their design, staffing, organization, and funding. However, there is a body of research and experience developing which could provide guidance in designing useful and appropriate educational alternatives.

As for real work, data show that a majority of high school seniors, for example, do work and are acquiring experience of some kind, essentially in unskilled jobs. What the call for work-study and career education requires in most communities is a major restructuring of employment opportunities and the school's involvement in job placement and counseling. Many groups and agencies in the community have not perceived themselves in the "schooling business" heretofore, and schools and communities will have to undertake considerable planning and training. Finally, secondary educators are being urged to improve the quality of education by working with the community and its resources. The other side of that coin involves educators growing in understanding of how to in-

corporate those learnings youth acquire from other educative sources into the school program, using those experiences to enrich curriculum.

Most of the reports see the high school as continuing to exist. The Kettering commission suggests that the comprehensive high school, continuing its program within a traditional context (especially for those students who choose it as an alternative), would serve as the keystone of a system of alternative schools. The National panel was "persuaded that both as an institution and as a social concept the American high school will remain as the keystone of this Nation's educational system. It requires orderly alteration."[99] The prospects for reforming secondary education are somewhat dimmed by the absence of consideration of so many critical elements in the high school itself.

None of the reports address the basic curricular questions about *what* should be learned. There is implicit in the proposals for moving learning out into the community in nonformal settings that particular kinds of experiences will be provided. The Kettering commission proposed that "the content of traditional high school curricula should be revised to eliminate busy-work components," that curriculum revision should attend to the fact of earlier maturation of adolescents, and that assessment of the extent to which students are achieving the school's objectives should be the basis for change. The commission did recommend that all youth have experience in what it calls *global education*, an area of study "concerned with scientific, ecological, and economic issues which affect everyone." The National panel asserted that "comprehensive education for adolescents must be tested by its collective capacity to provide appropriate balance and curricula mix" in five domains: personal values, citizenship education, the arts, the humanities, and technics or career education.[100] These are indeed curricular areas, but the details of curriculum development are not discussed.

The reports do not deal with the prime residents of the schools—students, staff, and parents. There is no attention given to the life and the climate of the school, the intricate networks of social interaction involving individuals and groups which comprise the school's social system. The classrooms are but one part of the school's social system—affected by the hierarchies and the exercise of power; by learning environments, structured and unstructured; and by the formal and informal transactions—all of which exercise considerable influence on learning and socialization. Students are maturing earlier; they are more knowledgeable about some aspects of life, having been exposed to television and other media. Insights about the professional staff and about teaching have raised questions about the existence of a sense of community and professional colleagueship. Attention to the school climate could well affect curriculum and instruction—both in their formal and informal aspects. To the triad of learner, society, and knowledge on which curriculum was to be based as propounded in the *Cardinal Principles*, a fourth element needs now be added—the school as an institution with a life, a climate, and ongoing transactions of its own.

The Kettering commission report talks of youth coming from more diverse backgrounds but does not indicate what this really means nor whether it is in fact true. By almost any criteria, American secondary education has failed its poor youth and those from racial and ethnic minorities to a greater extent than any of its other clients. And yet, no attention is given to the unique problems these youth have in transition to adulthood. Nor is attention paid to what the schools can do in the curriculum for all youth to enhance the understanding of the social problems the nation faces. Even in the consideration of community-based education, out-of-school learning and work-study experiences, no particular attention is given to the problems of implementing such approaches in poverty and ghetto areas.

The National panel explored two themes concerning mass media: One, that today's youth learn a great deal from the mass media; and, two, that educational institutions can play a significant role in helping youth cope with what they learn through such media. That panel discussed how schools might approach the alternations in the educational environment caused by the mass media. The Kettering commission urged studies of the impact of television on students' attitudes, perceptions, and life styles in order to know how to change school curricula and instruction. There is some acknowledgement of the importance of media, especially television, but the role of instructional media and educational technology is ignored.

The reports urged some kinds of staff and school accountability. The RISE commission also recommended that learners should be required to demonstrate specified levels of proficiency as a condition for completing secondary education —the minimum levels in reading, writing, and computation to be determined by the state while local school systems would establish minimal requirements in other essential skill areas. Most proposals for evaluation and related programs of accountability are limited to the cognitive and skills areas. Human values, attitudes, social concepts, and self-concepts are but a few of the noncognitive areas schools generally include in their goal statements but seldom attend to insofar as evaluation is concerned. The variety of learnings which would presumably result from out-of-school community-based experiences can hardly be evaluated by the traditional instruments and procedures to which schools have been accustomed. If evaluation is to be an integral part of curriculum and instruction—as it should be—then more sophisticated instruments and techniques are needed to assess what are bound to be more complex outcomes. The push for accountability in most of the reports tends to be more a form of advocacy than a firm proposal.

Little is said in the reports about staffing schools designed to deliver a comprehensive education. Clearly, implementation of the recommendations for combining school and community educational resources will require different patterns of relationships between staff, students, parents, community educators, and other youth-serving personnel. The role of a teacher, as currently defined in collective bargaining agreements across the nation, will have to be drastically altered. The entire process of recruiting, training, assigning staff—in fact, the whole concept of "teacher"—will have to be reexamined if teaching and learning activities are located in the community as well as in the classroom.

Finally, the matter of control and governance of youth education needs considerable study. Task Force '74 observed that "to date, one of two disparate forces has controlled the major components of educational activity." One force, during the era of emphasis on local control, is the district school board. The second force is the teacher organizations which are insisting on involvement in those things which relate to the work of the teacher. A third force which Task Force '74 saw emerging "is the consciousness of the community that it has a right to be involved," not in an advisory capacity but rather in a decision making one. Discussions of what today's adolescents are like in the various reports surely suggest that youth have now become a fourth force in the governance and control of schools. It is these new relationships between and among these various "forces" in matters of power and control which will affect the nature and kind of changes which will take place in secondary education.

In short, a comprehensive education for youth necessarily involves the institution called high school, and reform must deal with the educational processes in that agency as they relate to other educating agencies.

Although criticisms, reappraisals, and proposals for reform of America's high schools are a continuing activity, the edu-

cation profession and the general citizenry have never faced such a plethora of commission and panel reports as they do presently. Their number alone might be a sufficient basis for immobilizing those individuals who would like to change the high schools. However, as indicated above, there are some common themes running through these reports which provide clear parameters to the nature of the restructuring being advocated. These include such elements as combining the resources of the school and society in the task of providing a comprehensive education for youth, opening up almost unlimited options and choices for students, making work experience a more central component of the education of adolescents, reducing the segregation of youth from other groups, moving learning out of the classroom and capitalizing on out-of-school experiences, and altering compulsory attendance laws. Only implicitly are the basic curricular questions tackled—what should be taught, to whom, when, how, under what circumstances, by whom, using what resources, and evaluated in what fashion.

Hopefully, the new view of secondary education will result in a high school, programmatically and organizationally more flexible. It will necessarily design curricula focusing on inquiry about, and skills and understandings for, dealing with personal and societal problems. It will not use staff as the prime transmitters of information since that function is done better through other means. It will serve as the core for youth education, the catalyst for arranging and mediating learning in optimal settings, whether in the school or the community. It will plan its teaching-learning processes so as to capitalize on and complement those learnings which youth acquire through other agencies and media which educate and socialize youth. It will attend to creating the kind of environment and social system in which aesthetic, social, and personal development occur through participation in the life of the school.

The *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* never differentiated between what the school was to do and what other educative agencies were to contribute to the attainment of the seven objectives; the report did not differentiate between what the school was to do to develop such behaviors and what the family and other agencies were to do. This is true for all seven objectives, perhaps less so for "command of the fundamental processes." Obviously, the school does not assume or preempt full responsibility for all learning in the seven areas proposed by the *Cardinal Principals'* authors. We have, over the years, wrestled with this problem of the school with very narrow functions and the school as a residual institution—trying to do what other institutions could not, would not, or did not do. The current group of reports are equally unclear about what the school is and what it does. They confuse the processes of *educating*, *socializing*, and *schooling*. They thus cloud the special responsibility of the school in the transition of youth to adulthood. They fail to deal with the nature of the school and the processes of schooling.

As with earlier commission reports, these proposals for reform are being disseminated through publication. A few journal articles have been written, mostly critiquing one or more of the reports. Some professional associations have scheduled sessions at their meetings for presentations of the reports. In general, the audience has been limited to a few professional educators. None of these reports has caught the interest of a wider public as did, for instance, Conant's *The American High School Today* or Silberman's *Crisis in the Classroom*.

Schools have changed since the Committee of Ten report, despite the rhetoric of the American high school as an unchanging and immutable institution. Schools changed slowly, sporadically, and quite unevenly. We have very few examples of dramatic reform—witness the "era of curriculum innova-

tion" of the 1960s when millions of dollars were spent in reforming curriculum and teacher education. Many of the changes which have occurred can be related to the committee and commission reports of the past. The Eight-Year Study did not result in America's high schools all reshaping themselves into the pattern of the thirty experimental schools, but elements of the study did become part of a good many schools.

While there is a great deal we do not know about the change process, our insights and understandings have grown considerably during the past two decades as a result of research and development activities focusing on the management of change and innovation. Writing about changing the high school some thirty years ago, Caswell affirmed "the supreme importance of those working at the 'grass roots' in effecting change." We know well that grass roots change is slow.

What the current crop of reports can do, just as those which came before it, is to sensitize individuals and groups to the changing conditions and forces and to the urgency for change in the institutions and agencies concerned with the education of youth. The better reports do indeed call for a new view of secondary education or, at the very least, some new perspectives on the education of youth. It could well be that a combination of forces including better communication media, a press for community involvement and control, a youth population which differs from its predecessors, a new or at least different teaching profession, and better insights from the social and behavioral scientists could produce the conditions necessary for change being advocated. If so, the prospects for reforming secondary education are good—or at least better than they have been at any time since we began shaping America's high schools. Surely the need for reform has been established.

Caswell closed the John Dewey yearbook on *The American High School* as follows:

> *Vision* to see and understand what kind of education our youth need, *courage* to see that the high school makes the maximum contribution—these are requisites of the high school leader who would do his part in the important job ahead.[101]

If we consider the phrase "high school leader" in its generic sense, the challenge to all of us still stands.

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